

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Nicaragua

Introduction

Nicaragua does not have an institutionalized framework for the delivery of pro bono legal services. Nicaragua's pro bono tradition is primarily driven by non-governmental organizations, universities, and law firms that provide ad hoc free legal assistance to underserved communities. There is no mandatory pro bono requirement for lawyers. Key areas of focus include human rights, access to justice, and legal support for vulnerable populations. Despite limited regulatory frameworks explicitly promoting pro bono work, initiatives led by civil society and international organizations have some potential to help bridge the gap in legal services for those in need.

At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel. 	<p>The provision of legal services in Nicaragua is regulated by the Supreme Court of Justice, upon registration as a lawyer and obtaining a license. To register with the Supreme Court, a series of requirements must be met, including having a law degree from a university.</p> <p>There is no specific law regulating the provision of legal services; instead, resolutions of the Supreme Court of Justice regulate licensing for lawyers. Law No. 260¹, the Organic Law of the Judicial Power, regulates the free provision of services of public defenders and/or court-appointed defenders. In-house counsels must also meet the</p>

¹See

<http://legislacion.asamblea.gob.ni/normaweb.nsf/9e314815a08d4a6206257265005d21f9/05386fad7049367606258a5f00595e33?OpenDocument> (last visited on 14 February 2025).

	same requirements and comply with the same regulations.
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.	<p>Nicaragua does not have any specific laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p> <p>Under the Nicaraguan constitution², everyone has a right to representation by an attorney. All persons and entities that are citizens of or reside in Nicaragua are entitled to free legal services performed by an attorney appointed by the court. There are no explicit regulations or limitations on providing free legal services in Nicaragua, and there are no minimum fees required for providing legal services.</p>
3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?	There are no licensing requirements for the provision of pro bono legal services.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	Foreign lawyers must have their degree recognized and be licensed by the Supreme Court of Justice to provide legal services in Nicaragua.
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	There are no minimum pro bono hours requirements for lawyers in Nicaragua.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	No, aspiring lawyers in Nicaragua are not required to complete a minimum number of pro bono hours in order to become licensed lawyers.

² https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nicaragua_2005 (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

<p>7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?</p>	<p>No, there are no aspirational pro bono hours targets for Nicaraguan lawyers.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>Nicaragua does not have a formal Continuing Legal Education (CLE) system or equivalent credit applicable to pro bono hours.</p>
<p>Insurance and advertising</p>	
<p>9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?</p> <p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>There is no mandatory requirement for professional liability insurance for the provision of pro bono services.</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>There are no specific restrictions on the advertisement of pro bono cases or the solicitation of new pro bono clients. Advertisement of pro bono cases requires the express authorization of the relevant clients.</p>
<p>Pro bono practice and culture</p>	
<p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<p>The main areas of legal need include criminal law, family law, human rights³, property, access to justice for indigenous communities⁴, and migrant advocacy.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>The Public Defender's Office (Defensoría Pública) is the main provider of government-funded legal aid representation in Nicaragua.⁵</p> <p>Beyond the Public Defender's Office, provision of pro bono legal services is limited. Providers include NGOs, private law firms and university</p>

³ <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/nicaragua-un-experts-speak-of-final-blow-to-rule-of-law/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/central-america-and-the-caribbean/nicaragua/report-nicaragua/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁵ See <https://consultascausas.poderjudicial.gob.ni/> (last visited on 14 February 2025).

	<p>legal clinics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH), a civil society initiative, focused on the protection of human rights in Nicaragua. They investigate complaints to promote and defend human rights in various municipalities.⁶ • Some law firms undertake pro bono work on an informal basis.⁷ • The UNITEC Social Legal Clinic is an academic, professional, and social initiative that provides community legal advice and accompaniment through a team of advanced law students, tutor teachers, and legal professionals, strengthening ethical, practice-based training and promoting access to justice, social equity, and peaceful conflict resolution for the integral development of Nicaraguan society.⁸ • Judicial Facilitators operate in rural areas to improve access to justice.⁹
<p>13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?</p>	<p>There are no known noteworthy examples of innovative technology or artificial intelligence being used in connection with pro bono legal services.</p> <p>General legal information platforms and tools are emerging such as Lexius,¹⁰ or Asesor Legal Virtual Nicaragua, a digital legal advisor that aims to provide guidance and educational support to users about various legal topics and situations specific to Nicaragua. The virtual assistant leverages legal knowledge to help users understand complex legal terms and processes.¹¹</p>

⁶ <https://cenidh.org/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁷ <https://www.calalawyers.com/en/services/pro-bono> and https://www.debevoise.com/news/2025/06/debevoise-pro-bono-projects?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁸ https://www.unitec.edu.ni/consultorio-juridico/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁹ https://www.oas.org/dil/Judicial_Facilitators_nicaragua_objetivo_history.htm (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹⁰ https://lexius.io/ni/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹¹ https://www.yeschat.ai/gpts-9t55RB7W1WZ-Asesor-Legal-Virtual-Nicaragua?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts

<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Pro bono resources in Nicaragua are limited. The Public Defender's Office (Defensoría Pública) provides legal aid representation but does not coordinate with private lawyers for pro bono cases. There are currently no formal pro bono clearinghouses or centralized sources for pro bono opportunities. Pro bono work is typically undertaken on an ad hoc basis through direct client contact or informal referrals. The above NGOs and clinics can be contacted for potential opportunities to collaborate.</p>
<p>15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?</p>	<p>Currently, there is no centralized organization where national or foreign lawyers can register to receive pro bono opportunities.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>There are no awards or rankings related to pro bono work in Nicaragua.</p>

Acknowledgements

Name of Local Counsel: García & Bodán

Name of Individual at Local Counsel: Ileana Montenegro Medina

Learn more

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